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- **Scholarship Opportunities for Better Process Control School (BPCS) – Starts January 15**
  - **Soil and Nutrition Conference: Putting Principles into Practice**
  - **Grant Opportunity: US Department of the Treasury - Community Development Financial institutions (CDFI)**
  - **CISA's 2013 Winter Workshop Series Starts Soon**
  - **NE Grows! – Early Registration Deadline January 15**
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## **Scholarship Opportunities for Better Process Control School (BPCS) – Starts January 15**

Value-Added Processing – Farmers invited to Apply - UMass Extension and MA Department of Agricultural Resources encourage Farmers who grow specialty crops with an interest in value-added processing to apply for this scholarship opportunity to participate in Better Process Control School. The primary objective of this scholarship is to increase the food safety processing skills for farmers interested in producing value-added specialty crops (examples include: acidified foods, glass container closures, retorting, etc.).

Course Date: Tuesday, January 15 to Friday, January 18 from 7:30AM to 5PM

Location: UMass Amherst, Campus Center

Tuition Fee for Scholarship Participant: \$150

Please note: Tuition fee includes administrative costs, course materials, continental breakfast & lunch.

Students are responsible for their own meals and lodging outside of the class.

### Eligibility:

- Candidates must presently process or intend to process canned foods using specialty crops (high acid, low acid and/or acidified products)
- Candidates must be willing to participate in the entire course program
- Must be willing to participate in 4 survey assessments

### Course Details:

Producing healthy, convenient and safe value-added processed foods is a way to further extend specialty crops throughout the year and provide new product offerings to consumers. However, in order to produce safe, quality foods, there are a variety of core food safety principals that need to be identified and controlled when processing. Through the support of the MDAR Specialty Crop Block grant, UMass Food Science Extension invite 10 specialty crop farmers that are interested in producing value-added products to participate in a 3.5 day course, "Better Process Control School" to learn the key food safety processing fundamentals.

By law, all commercial processors, when first engaging in the manufacturing, processing, or packing of low acid or acidified foods in any state must register with the FDA on Form FDA 2541 (Food Canning Establishment Registration; 21 CFR 108.25, <http://extension.psu.edu/food-safety>). In order to be approved as a registered process, businesses need to operate with a certified supervisor on the premise when processing.

Better Process Control School offers instruction which fulfills the FDA and USDA Good Manufacturing Practice requirements to certify supervisors of acidification, thermal processing and container closure evaluation operations during the canning of low-acid or acidified foods. Throughout the course six basic topics will be covered and with an

examination at the end of each session. Participants that complete the full exam and score a minimum of 70 will receive a passing score that will be acknowledged through a certificate.

Application: All interested applicants are required to contact Amanda Kinchla, Food Science Extension via email [amanda.kinchla@foodsci.umass.edu](mailto:amanda.kinchla@foodsci.umass.edu).

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## Soil and Nutrition Conference: Putting Principles into Practice



NOFA/Mass presents the next in its Advanced Grower's Seminar Series, featuring innovative farmers using organic practices to improve soil and farm profitability.

Soil and Nutrition Conference: Putting Principles into Practice

**January 31 - February 2, 2013 (Thursday to Saturday)**

First Churches, 129 Main St, Northampton, MA

With John Kempf of Advancing Eco-Agriculture; Dan Kittredge of Bionutrient Food Association, and Derek Christianson of Brix Bounty Farm

Sponsored by NOFA/Mass and Bionutrient Food Association

Description: This conference aims to grow the movement for enhancing soil fertility as a basis for the long-term ecological and economic sustainability of farming, the environment, and society as a whole. The focus of this year's conference is applying practical management strategies on the farm from principles of biological soil fertility. The lead speaker is John Kempf from Middlefield, OH, with Dan Kittredge and Derek Christianson as co-panelists. A detailed outline of the conference can be found [online here](#).

Registration: Register by January 17, 2013, and pay the early registration fee of \$150. Members of any NOFA chapter, RFC, or BFA receive \$10 member discount. Download a a mail-in registration form by [clicking here](#). Contact: Ben Grosscup at 413-658-5374 or e-mail [ben.grosscup@nofamass.org](mailto:ben.grosscup@nofamass.org). Thinking about coming? If you are thinking about attending and would like to share about your specific challenges as a grower, we will use your feedback to make the even more responsive to your issues. For the survey, [click here](#).

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## Grant Opportunity: US Department of the Treasury - Community Development Financial institutions (CDFI)

**Program:** Financial Assistance grants are made to CDFIs to provide critically needed capital, credit and other financial products in addition to technical assistance to community residents and businesses, service providers, and developers working to meet community needs. Healthy Food Financing Initiative funds are also available, to create healthy food retail outlets in food deserts.

**Funds:** \$5,000,000 maximum

**Deadline:** February 28, 2013. The CDFI Fund strongly encourages all applications be submitted at least three days before the deadline.

**Eligible:** Applicants must be certified as a CDFI, or be certifiable as a CDFI, by the CDFI Fund. Applicants whose activities are part of a broader neighborhood revitalization strategy and/or that target marginalized or isolated populations will be scored more favorably. Additional information will be forthcoming in late January 2013 regarding the application process. Information at [http://www.cdfifund.gov/what we do/programs\\_id.asp?programID=7](http://www.cdfifund.gov/what_we_do/programs_id.asp?programID=7).

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## CISA's 2013 Winter Workshop Series Starts Soon

The new year has arrived and CISA's 2013 Winter Workshop series is right around the corner! If you haven't yet heard the news, our program this winter is aimed at helping participants to become more finance-savvy and prepared to make big decisions about new markets and major investments. The seven- workshop series is titled "*Financial Management and Business Decision Making*" and the first one is on **January 29**. Find out more about what we'll cover in each workshop in the attached flyer.

Cost to attend the series is \$60 for Local hero members, or \$12 per workshop. The non-member fee is \$75 for the series or \$15 per workshop. Register for the workshops you'd like to attend ASAP to secure your place. You can register [online now](#), or contact Devon at 413-665-7100 x22 or [devon@buylocalfood.org](mailto:devon@buylocalfood.org).

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## NE Grows! – Early Registration Deadline - January 15

Register by Tuesday, January 15 to take advantage of a 40% savings! The Northeast's leading horticulture trade show and green industry seminars await you at New England Grows, one of the largest and most popular horticultural and green industry events in North America.

Three quick and easy ways to register for Grows today:

1. [Online](#)
2. [Mail](#)
3. [Fax](#)

Only 5 days remain TO SAVE:

- \$49 for all three days – price increases to \$69.00 on Wednesday, January 16
- Bring your whole team and save more! Just \$45.00 when you register 4 or more people from the same company, at the same time by January 15.

New England Grows is the place to get business done this winter. You don't want to miss it!  
<http://www.newenglandgrows.org/>.

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MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – MDAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit MDAR's website at [mass.gov/agr](http://mass.gov/agr), and/or follow at [twitter.com/MDARCommish](https://twitter.com/MDARCommish). For our ongoing list of events and workshops visit and bookmark: [www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming\\_up.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/events/coming_up.htm).